

# Ruth's Rushcliffe Round-up



January 2023

## Millions of pounds of NHS funding secured for Nottinghamshire

At the start of this month, Rishi Sunak outlined his top 5 priorities as Prime Minister. In this list, he committed to improving our NHS by cutting waiting lists and getting people the care they need more quickly.

In the same month, we have seen millions of pounds put into Nottinghamshire to support the NHS and save lives, including:

- £4.1 million of new funding to help free up hospital beds so people can be admitted more quickly from A&E to wards and reduce pressure on emergency departments while also speeding up ambulance handovers. This is part of a £2.5 billion fund. You can see me questioning the Secretary of State about this in the video [here](#).

- £2.7 million for new mental health-based 'places of safety' suites in Nottinghamshire which will provide a safe space for people detained by the police before they get the help they need. This is part of a £150 million fund to build 150 new facilities to support mental health urgent and emergency care services.

Off the back of these announcements, the Government and NHS launched the

new Urgent and Emergency Care Recovery Plan with £1 billion investment to reduce waiting times and improve patient experiences both in Nottinghamshire hospitals and nationally. It also sees new innovative reforms that have been adopted by certain trusts being expanded nationally.

The plan includes:

- 800 new ambulances, 100 of which will be specialist mental health vehicles
  - 5,000 more hospital beds
- A Government-run national recruitment campaign, providing funding for local recruitment and retention activities, which will build on the 32,000 more nurses and 16,000 more doctors already working in the NHS than were in 2019.
- Patient flow control centres, to quickly identify blockages in a patient's journey
- Care transfer hubs, to coordinate patient transfer between hospital care and social care
- E-bed management systems, to speed up the availability of beds when they become free
- Online "virtual wards" to enable up to 50,000 patients a month to get the care and monitoring they need at home, without the need for a hospital admission.

I praised these innovations in Parliament, and was pleased to learn from the Health Secretary that Nottinghamshire would have access to these immediately, so I am looking forward to seeing their use in our county.

Watch [here](#).

We have also received £1.6 million for Nottingham University Hospitals Trust to buy two new mobile breast screening units and fund upgrades to two of its existing units. This is part of a £10 million fund in England for 29 new mobile breast screening units and for upgrades to existing units to enable NHS teams to reach areas of the county where more checks for breast cancer are needed to reduce travel time to appointments.

## Raising issues with the Prime Minister

This month, I met with the Prime Minister several times to raise issues with him and his policy team.

During a breakfast meeting with other Parliamentary Private Secretaries, I thanked the PM for the support he has committed to the NHS in Nottinghamshire and expressed the need for reform to adapt to the increase in patient numbers and new health profiles of patients. I was also able to use this opportunity to raise the East Midlands Freeport and how we can make it the most successful in the UK.

I also joined other Conservative Environment Network MPs to speak to the PM about the UK's strategy for attracting green jobs and investment as we shift closer to a green economy.

Finally, I met with the PM's policy team to discuss tackling scams, ahead of the launch of the Government's counter-fraud strategy to ensure we are making it harder than ever for fraudsters, both online and offline, to operate in the UK.



## Campaign Win: Improving access to life-saving defibrillators

There were some massive steps forward on our campaign to increase the number of defibrillators available in communities and to make them more affordable.

Just after Christmas, the Government announced a £1 million fund for community groups to buy defibrillators. This is expected to place thousands of new defibrillators in communities across England in places like local shops, post offices and parks. The funding could reduce the cost of a community defibrillator by around 50%.

In addition to this, the Government has confirmed that deliveries of defibrillators to all state-funded schools in England have begun taking place this month. Last year, the Government pledged to make sure every state school in England had at least one of the life-saving devices.

This is wonderful news and something I have campaigned for with the West Bridgford Colts Football club. However, as I wrote in the Daily Express, there are further steps we can take to tackle the two main barriers of access to defibrillators: cost and confidence. Two things the Government could do are to look at reforming the VAT regime around defibrillators after the fund closes, to save community groups 20% on the purchase price and introduce a training requirement for communities, with grants from the fund being dependent on this training being taken up. You can read my article in full [here](#).



## Campaign Win: Tackling flooding in Rushcliffe

As many of you will know, tackling flooding in Rushcliffe is one of my top priorities.

In winter 2019, we saw the devastating impact of extreme weather events, which is why I published my Rushcliffe Flood Report to investigate the causes and possible solutions to mitigate flooding in the future. While investigating, residents across Rushcliffe told me that they believed new housing developments were contributing to the issues because they were not being built with adequate drainage systems to deal with increased surface water runoff. As we know, new developments can inadvertently add to surface and sewer flood risk by covering permeable surfaces like grassland and soil that would otherwise assist in dealing with heavy rainfall.

Having taken this issue up with ministers I am delighted that the Government is now adopting a new approach to sustainable drainage. The approach would make sustainable drainage systems, including features such as soakaways, grassed areas, permeable surfaces and wetlands, mandatory to new developments in England. This reduces the overall amount of water that ends up in the sewers and causes storm overflow discharges.

In addition to this, the Government has also agreed to consult on whether water companies should become statutory consultees in the planning process. This would mean that infrastructure upgrades to mitigate flooding in new developments and their surrounding areas will be proactive and help us avoid an increase to flood risk from new development.

I was encouraged to hear this, as one of the key actions from my Rushcliffe Flood Report in 2020 was to ensure that the risk of flooding should be a key test of whether any development is sustainable.

As you will see from the article on the newly announced Environment Improvement Plan further down, the Government will go further to tackle flooding, including introducing rewards for farmers for actions to reduce risks and impacts from floods and planting trees along rivers and within the wider catchment which will offer enormous benefits for water quality, flood management, biodiversity and climate resilience.

I am delighted that the Government is firmly behind us in our battle against flooding and I will keep you updated with any new developments.

More locally, I was pleased that National Highways have recently completed a survey on the state of attenuation ponds in Cropwell Butler after I met with them on site last year. National Highways are now preparing a report on this survey, which they will publish soon. The findings in this report will help us continue to move forward to further mitigate flooding in the village. In addition, a build-up of silt has also been cleared to release some of the pressure on the water pipe network in the village so it can safely discharge extra water effectively.

## Questioning the CEO of Royal Mail on the delivery of letters and parcels

As a member of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee (BEIS), I took up concerns raised by constituents about letters being delivered late with Royal Mail CEO Simon Thompson this month.

I asked him about reports that Royal Mail was prioritising the delivery of parcels over letters after being notified by some of you. This policy would be problematic, not least because people would be missing letters containing important information about NHS appointments, paying bills, and other things.

Simon Thompson told the Committee that this was not Royal Mail policy and this has been communicated to postal offices throughout the country multiple times.

You can watch that session [here](#).

After the session, however, my inbox and the inboxes of many members of the Committee were flooded with messages from Royal Mail workers from across the country informing us that they have been told to prioritise parcels.

Alarmed by this, we have recalled Simon Thompson to the Committee to explain and clarify his position. I will keep you updated on this, but in the meantime, if you work for or know anyone that works for Royal Mail, please feel free to email with any details you may have at [ruth.edwards.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:ruth.edwards.mp@parliament.uk).

## Reducing the cost of energy and protecting vulnerable customers and businesses

I was very concerned to hear reports of vulnerable energy customers being forcibly put on prepayment metres this month. I raised this directly with the Minister for Energy in Parliament to find out what action could be taken if energy companies did not play fair.

Watch [here](#).

During our BEIS Select Committee session this week, the Committee was able to question the CEO of Ofgem on this issue and on the treatment of vulnerable customers, and what options were available to them if energy companies continued to act in this way.

Watch [here](#).

Following horrendous reports in the Times of how British Gas was treating vulnerable customers I am glad that Ofgem has now issued a legal order to major energy firms, instructing them to stop the enforcement of these prepayment metres. Ofgem is also undertaking a thorough review into the market to ensure practices like these never happen again.

I talked about this issue on GB news which you can watch [here](#).

## Protecting the environment: welcoming a new Environmental Improvement Plan

This month saw the announcement of a new Environmental Improvement Plan which sets out how we will work with landowners, communities and businesses to deliver each of our goals for improving the environment.

This plan saw a huge campaign win for our hedgerows. You may remember last year I signed up to be one of CPRE's Hedgerow Heroes and pledged my

support for the protection and restoration of the UK's hedgerow network. This plan has given government support to landowners and farmers to create or restore 30,000 miles of hedgerows a year by 2037 and 45,000 miles of hedgerows a year by 2050.

Specifically, the plan covers how we will achieve 10 goals, ranging from promoting biodiversity net-gain and making sure developments leave habitats in a better state for wildlife than before to enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

You can read the plan in full [here](#).

## **Backing our police: fighting for a fair Police Funding Formula**

This month, I asked the Home Secretary to join me in thanking Rushcliffe's Neighbourhood Policing Inspector Rob Lawton and his team for the fantastic work they do across Rushcliffe.

405 new police officers have joined Nottinghamshire Police since 2019 as part of the Government's efforts to recruit 20,000 more police officers across the country. We are now 85% of the way to achieving this target. Many have gone into neighbourhood policing teams and we have new neighbourhood beat officers in Rushcliffe as a result

I also asked the Home Secretary to give us an update on the review into the Police Funding Formula which is used to divide money available for total police funding between forces. I was pleased to learn that the Government intends to begin consultation on this very soon. I look forward to contributing to this and making sure Nottinghamshire Police has its fair share of the policing budget.

Watch [here](#).

## **Protecting our communities: Westminster Hall debate on Spiking**

This month, I attended and spoke in a Westminster Hall debate on spiking.

You may remember in 2021 and last year, there was a spate of spiking in Nottingham where perpetrators were using needles to drug people in bars and clubs..

Women, girls, and anyone wanting to enjoy a night out should feel safe to do so. In the debate I made the case for better reporting mechanisms for the police as the better the data we have, the better our response will be. I was pleased that the Government has already asked the National Police Chiefs Council to establish a reporting mechanism so that all police forces can centrally report any spiking incidents.

We also need to send a message to those who think they can spike innocent people. We need to show them that if they spike people, they should expect a custodial sentence.

Watch [here](#).

## **Countryside and Environment - Hearing from Rushcliffe's Farmers**

Huge thanks to North Lodge Farm for hosting my third Agriculture Forum earlier this month. I set this forum up with the farming community in Rushcliffe to get their feedback on the issues facing the farmers here and to take them back to ministers in government.

In this session, we discussed energy support for farmers, the cost of fertiliser, food security, and rural levelling-up as well as the additions to the Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) that were announced just a few hours before the meeting. This new way of supporting farming balances food production and the need to increase our food security with protecting our environment and halting and reversing the decline of biodiversity in the UK's countryside.

The new ELMs measures include environmental standards that farmers can get paid for meeting on the following:

Hedgerows  
Integrated pest management  
Nutrient management  
Arable and horticultural land  
Improved grassland  
Low input grassland

You can read more about these new standards and ELMs [here](#)

Thank you again to Chris and Julia for hosting us all. (It was also nice to meet the resident alpacas before the meeting!)



## Securing the UK's critical mineral supply

One of the issues I am focused on is securing the UK's supply of critical minerals.

Last year, the Business, Energy and Industrial Select Committee heard that 95% of the world's lithium is processed in China. This has created an over-reliance on China for this mineral, which is the key mineral in battery production for example. This month, I asked the Minister for Energy what more the Government is doing to boost the UK's own supply of lithium through improving our own capabilities, but also by creating new partnerships with our allies.

You can watch that video [here](#).

## Out and About

In Parliament this month, I met with representatives of Bupa Dentistry after we were notified that they were removing NHS appointments from their surgery in West Bridgford. We discussed the reasons for their decision and some of the issues facing dentistry more broadly. I will continue to work to persuade them to bring NHS provision back to the area and to raise the issues they flagged around the dental contract with ministers as work continues to reform it

I really enjoyed my visit to Keyworth Primary School to meet with their School Council, have a tour of their wonderful school and talk about how I can support them as their MP. The pupils have recently been learning about democracy and Parliament and had some great questions about life in parliament, policies and my animals.. Thank you Mrs Holmes for inviting me to

I also had the pleasure of joining the West Bridgford Brownies to discuss what being an MP is all about, and to hear what laws they would pass if they were an MP for the day.



It was Holocaust Memorial Day this month. Along with other Members of Parliament, I signed the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment, pledging my commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day, as well as honouring those who were murdered during the Holocaust. In the book, I wrote:

*I will never forget my visit with the Conservative Friends of Israel to the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem this year. The stories told there of the millions of men, women and children will stay with me forever. So many lives and hopes and dreams, extinguished by such hatred. I want to thank the Holocaust Memorial Trust for giving us the opportunity to honour them and the chance to pledge again to fight all forms of antisemitism, wherever we*



*find it.*

I was also honoured to visit the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Newark to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Many thanks to the team for welcoming me and showing me around the incredible centre which does so much to educate young people about the horrors of the holocaust and lets them hear from survivors themselves. I really do recommend that you visit if you can and learn about this dark period in human history.



Along with other East Midlands colleagues I met with the Chancellor ahead of the Spring Budget. We made the case for continued investment in the region and discussed how we can best support businesses in the current environment.



This month, I had my first street surgery of the new year. Along with Cllr. Roger Upton, I met with shoppers at Morrisons in Gamston to listen to their views and offer any help if they had an issue. I will be holding more of these surgeries throughout the year and around Rushcliffe, but if you have an issue you would like my help with, please feel free to email me at [ruth.edwards.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:ruth.edwards.mp@parliament.uk) to book an appointment. We can do surgery appointments in person at my office or online, whichever is easier for you.



I also chaired the 6th Rushcliffe Cycling Forum. I set this forum up, along with members from active travel organisations such as Pedals, to improve all types of active travel in Rushcliffe.

We started the session with an update from National Highways on their work to support cyclists and walkers in Rushcliffe, before moving on to representatives from Active Travel England to hear about their work in collaboration with Rushcliffe Borough Council to ensure that higher standards of cycle infrastructure are provided.

It was brilliant to meet St John's Ambulance volunteers in Nottingham recently! I went to learn more about their first aid services and efforts at a local level to expand public access to lifesaving equipment, such as defibrillators, to strengthen first aid resilience in Nottingham and Rushcliffe. They are a fantastic volunteer organisation who do so much good in the community. If you are interested in volunteering, or even just taking a first aid course, you can find more information [here](#).



This month, I attended a meeting at the Embassy of Iceland to meet with a delegation of MPs from Iceland's version of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee. They were in the UK to learn more about our world-leading offshore wind industry. Iceland is also a leader in green hydrogen and the roll out of electric cars which is why it was a pleasure to meet with them and learn from their experience.



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